

Gongduk language

Gongduk or **Gongdu** (Tibetan: ཇོང་-'දུ', Wylie: *Dgong-'dus*, it is also known as *Gongdubikha*^[3]) is an endangered Sino-Tibetan language spoken by about 1,000 people in a few inaccessible villages located near the Kuri Chhu river in the Gongdue Gewog of Mongar District in eastern Bhutan. The names of the villages are Bala, Dagsa, Damkhar, Pam, Pangthang, and Yangbari (*Ethnologue*).

Gongduk has complex verbal morphology, which *Ethnologue* considers a retention from Proto-Tibeto-Burman,^[1] and is lexically highly divergent.^[4] On this basis, it is apparently not part of any major subgroup and will probably have to be assigned to its own branch.^{[4][5]}

The people are said to have come from hunters that would move from place to place at times.^[6]

Currently, George van Driem is working towards the completion of a description of Gongduk based on his work with native speakers in the Gongduk area.^[5]

Gongduk	
Gongdukpa Ang	དྲྱ ཁ ར ཉ ཉ
Region	Bhutan
Native speakers	2,000 (2006) ^[1]
Language family	Sino-Tibetan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gongduk
Writing system	Tibetan script
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	goe
Glottolog	gong1251 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/gong1251) ^[2]

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Classification

George van Driem (2001:870)^[7] proposes that the Greater Bumthang (East Bodish) languages, including Bumthang, Khengkha, and Kurtöp, may have a Gongduk substratum. Gongduk itself may also have a non-Tibeto-Burman substrate.

Gerber (2018)^[8] notes that Gongduk has had extensive contact with Black Mountain Mönpa before the arrival of East Bodish languages in Bhutan. Gongduk also has many Tshangla loanwords. The following comparative vocabulary table from Gerber (2018: 13-16) compares Gongduk, Black Mountain Mönpa, and Bjokapakha, which is a divergent Tshangla variety.

Gloss	Gongduk	Black Mountain Mönpa	Bjokapakha
hair (on head)	θym	gulun	tsham
tongue	dəli	'li:	lɪ
eye	mik	mek ~ mik	miŋ
ear	nərəŋ	naktaŋ	nabali
tooth	γn	'a: ~ wa:	sha
bone	rukŋŋ	ħytphok ~ yöphok	khanŋ-
blood	wini?	kɔk	yi
hand/arm	gur	lɣk ~ lok	gadaŋ
leg/foot	bidɣ?	dɣkpeŋ ~ tɛkəŋ	bitiŋ
faeces	ki	cok	khɛ
water	dɣŋli	cö, khe	ri
rain	wɣ	ghö	ŋamtsu
dog	oki	cüla ~ khula	khu
pig	don	pɔk	phakpa
fish	kuŋwə	nye	ŋa
louse	dɣr	θæ:k	shiŋ
bear	bekpələ	wym ~ wom	omsha
son	ledə	bæθa:	za
house	kiŋ	mhi: ~ mhɛ:	phai
fire	mi	'a:mik ~ 'a:mit	mɛ
to hear	lə yu-	go:-	nai tha
to see	tɣŋ-	tuŋ-	thorŋ-
to look	məl- ~ myt-	mak-	gotto
to sit	mi- ~ mu-	bunŋ- ~ bæŋ-	laŋ-
to die	komθ-	θɛ:- ~ θɛ?-	shi-
to kill	tɣt-	θüt- ~ θut- ~ θit-	she-
1sg pronoun	ðə	kö	jaŋ
2sg pronoun	gi	iŋ	nan
3sg pronoun	gon	ho?ma (mas.); ho?met (fem.)	dan
1pl pronoun	ðiŋ	ɔŋdat (incl.); anak (excl.)	ai
2pl pronoun	giŋ	iŋnak	nai
3pl pronoun	gonmə	ho?oŋ	dai

Grammar

Morphology

Gongduk has productive suffixal morphology (van Driem 2014).^[9]

<-mə[?]tⁿ> 'plural suffix in human nouns'

Examples:

- olo[?]ŋmə[?]tⁿ 'children' < olo[?]k 'child' + -mə[?]tⁿ
- ŋidv̥mə[?]tⁿ 'people' < ŋidv̥ 'person' + -mə[?]tⁿ
- aro[?]ŋmə[?]tⁿ 'friends' < aro[?]k 'friend' + -mə[?]tⁿ

However, non-human plural nouns do not take on any suffixes, and remain the same:

- kurtə 'horse, horses'
- kəitv̥ 'bird, birds'
- kinj 'house, houses'

<-e ~ -ðe ~ -θe> 'ergative and possessive suffix'

Examples:

- bꝝ?lꝝpə-e 'the people of Bꝝ?lꝝ [ergative]'
- choŋnən-ðe me 'the seed of the maize'
- nor-θe taf 'meat of the cow [beef]'
- rek-θe rukv̥ŋ 'head bone [skull]'
- aro?k-te-θe 'the friend [ergative]'
- əp drəkpə-e 'Ap Drakpa [ergative]'
- θok-θe əkəm 'egg of offering (sacrificial egg)'
- lei-ti-ðe ju?mə 'after one month'

<-gi> 'ablative suffix'

Examples:

- ڏinj goŋdu?-gi əna 'We are from Gongduk'
- nikkələŋ-gi 'by way of the stairs'
- dəkθə-gi 'from Daksa'
- kidu-gi 'as a kidu [government gift]'
- bꝝ?lꝝ-gi 'from Bꝝ?lꝝ'
- denkəle wꝝŋ-gi 'from Dengkalé Dale'
- do?moŋ-gi 'from "Black Roof" village'
- phəŋŋəŋ pəm-gi 'from Phajong Pam'

<-gu ~ -go ~ -ku ~-ko> 'dative / locative suffix'

Examples:

- gərəŋ-go 'to whom'
- ohəŋ du?-gu 'in that village'
- rek-ko 'to [his] head'
- ðə-go 'to me'
- jə-go 'to India'
- gaonŋ-go 'whereto, where precisely'
- pəkpək-ko 'at times, sometimes'
- thimphu-gu 'to Thimphu'

Demonstratives

Gongduk demonstratives precede head nouns.^[9]

ohəŋ 'that (demonstrative)'

Examples:

- ohəŋ ɲidɣ 'that person'
- ohəŋ koŋ 'that tree'
- ohəŋ du?gu 'in that village'

Personal pronouns

Gongduk has the following personal pronoun paradigm.^[9]

	singular (absolutive)	singular (ergative & genitive)	plural (absolutive)	plural (ergative & genitive)	dual (absolutive)	dual (ergative & genitive)
first person	ðə	ðe	ðiŋ	ðiŋ, ðiŋ ɳəŋpoe		
second person	gi	gi	giŋ	giŋ, giŋ ɳəŋpoe		
third person	gon	gonðe	gonmə	gonməe, gonma ɳəŋpoe		
inclusive					iθi, iθirəŋ gəŋpo	dei, dei gəŋpoe

van Driem (2014) compares the Gongduk first person singular personal pronoun ðə 'I, me' to Kathmandu Newar *dži* : ~ *dži*- 'I, me' and Tshangla *džaŋ* ~ *dži*- ~ *džiŋ*- 'I, me'. He also compares the Gongduk first person plural personal pronoun ðiŋ 'we, us' to Kathmandu Newar *džʰai* ~ *džʰi*- 'we, us'.

Vocabulary

The Gongduk words and phrases below are from van Driem (2014).^[9]

Basic vocabulary

■ rek 'head'	■ dola 'cooked <i>Setaria</i> or rice'	■ kəity 'bird'
■ rukxṇ 'bone'	■ chojnən 'maize'	■ əkəm 'egg'
■ əŋ 'language, mouth'	■ ɻwɻ 'banana'	■ jə 'day (24-hour period)'
■ dɻŋli 'water'	■ tah 'meat'	■ lei 'month'
■ wɻ 'rain'	■ wərə 'highland paddy, ghaiyā'	■ olo?k 'child'
■ yər 'cliff'	■ khərəŋ 'cooked <i>Panicum</i> or maize'	■ ɻjdy 'person'
■ dɻ 'salt'	■ don 'pig'	■ aro?k 'friend'
■ ɻn 'tooth'	■ nor 'cow'	■ du? 'village'
■ koŋ 'tree'	■ kurtə 'horse'	■ kiŋ 'house'
■ diŋ 'wood'		■ nikkələŋ 'stairs'
■ me 'seed'		■ ɻok 'offering'
		■ goŋdu? 'Gongduk'

Numerals

■ ti '1'	■ Guwə '9'
■ niktsə '2'	■ deyə '10'
■ towə '3'	■ deθəti '11'
■ diyə, piyə '4'	■ deθəniktsə '12'
■ ɻəwə '5'	■ deθətowə '13'
■ qukpə '6'	■ khæe 'score (20)'
■ ɻukpə '7'	■ khæe ɻəwə 'five score, i.e. one hundred'
■ yitpə, hetpə '8'	

Interrogative pronouns

■ gərəŋ 'who'	■ gainəŋ 'which, whence'
■ gərəe 'whose'	■ qətigu 'at what time'
■ ɻəpo 'what'	■ ɻəu, ɻəudi 'why, how come'
■ ko 'when'	■ gora, gorapəm 'how, in which way'
■ gaŋ 'where, whither'	■ ohəŋ 'that (demonstrative)'
■ qəti 'how much, how many'	

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External links

- ELAR archive of Documentation of the flora and fauna of Gongduk (<http://elar.soas.ac.uk/deposit/0353>)

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